

# Cultivating Creativity: 2021–2025



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## **A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR AND CHAIR**

Dear Friends,

The Delaware Division of the Arts and Delaware State Arts Council are pleased to present our strategic plan for 2021–2025. Having gathered input from more than 400 participants statewide, this plan represents the goals and aspirations of the people we serve.

We endeavored in this process to reach out to communities and individuals we have not heard from in the past. Our focus in this process, and for the strategic plan, is to expand our reach, impacting new communities and historically marginalized populations.

To that end, we are committed to supporting the arts and cultivating creativity to enhance the quality of life in Delaware, while upholding a core set of values, including artistic merit, diversity, equity, inclusion, and innovation.

The Division seeks to strengthen the arts sector to serve all of Delaware’s communities; enhance the promotion of Delaware’s arts resources; ensure access to quality arts education for PreK-12 youth; and advance community development and public engagement through the arts.

Our goal was to craft a strategic plan that is clear, comprehensive, and flexible. To correspond with the strategic plan, the Division and Council will annually develop an operational plan, corresponding to the fiscal year, that integrates specific action steps, evaluative measures, and timelines with the outcomes and strategies in the plan.

The rationale behind this approach is simple: to keep the Division focused on the long-term outcomes and strategies of the plan, while developing operational plans that recognize the realities of a changing environment and variable resources over the short term.

We are grateful to all those who provided input in the shaping of this plan. We invite you to share in our work and let us know how we can better serve Delaware in support of the arts.

Sincerely,

Paul Weagraff, Director  
Delaware Division of the Arts

Joseph Mack Wathen, Chair  
Delaware State Arts Council

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The work on the Delaware Division of the Arts' 2021–2025 Strategic Plan began in September 2020, six months after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Arts organizations and artists were greatly impacted by mandated health and safety guidelines, and in Delaware (as elsewhere) there were heightened concerns centered on racial equity and social justice. Recognizing the significance of the moment, the Division chose to incorporate broad and diverse input on our work, seeking to understand the state of the state's arts organizations, artists, arts educators, and the art economy. An in-depth process consisting of 30 individual interviews, ten focus groups, three virtual town halls, four online surveys, and myriad email comments allowed over 400 individuals to provide the insights that created this plan. All work was conducted using social distancing measures, and input included both those who had received Division grants and those who engage with the arts but had no prior experience with the Division.

Participants shared how they value the arts, recognizing it as a vital component of a thriving economy, with awareness that the arts provide job skills; bring people together; and create physical, spiritual, and emotional wellness. Results indicated satisfaction with the Division's grantmaking and programs, and the staff received high marks for responsiveness and communication skills. However, there was a perception that the Division concentrates its grantmaking in more traditional art forms, and many individuals called for an expanded funding strategy embracing non-traditional art forms that engage with more racially and culturally diverse artists.

COVID-19 has had a dramatic and adverse effect on the creative sector. According to Brookings Institution estimates, over one-third of Delaware's creative jobs were lost in the first three months of the pandemic. Arts organizations participating in the survey estimated a 57% drop in 2020 audiences. The arts are a critical component of the state's economic strength, and surveys reflected how the state's businesses, arts organizations, government, schools, and artists rely on one another. School-age youth were of great concern. Access to arts programming outside of school is sparse in certain areas of the state, and inconsistent internet access means that youth engagement in school-based arts has been curtailed. However, many Delaware arts organizations found creative ways to engage youth in their homes, ranging from the creation of community arts projects to home delivery of art supplies.

During the course of planning outreach, the Division consistently received feedback on opportunities that would improve access to the arts and to arts funding for both artists of color and art forms reflecting differing cultural heritage. Arts organizations are interested in receiving support that would enable them to diversify leadership and explore ways to improve

accessibility and arts engagement with diverse audiences. In addition to funding more diverse art forms, artists would like the Division to provide support for skill-building in business practices, as well as outreach that would connect them to artist peers. There is recognition that some parts of Delaware do not have ready access to local arts venues, and respondents indicated a desire for the Division to explore state-wide opportunities to benefit these regions. Finally, there is a desire to see an increase in funding through possible government and private sector partnerships that would boost investment in the arts.

Based on these findings, staff and a designated working group revised the Division's Mission, Vision, and Values, identifying desired outcomes and strategies for 2022-2025. In partnership with other government agencies and the Delaware Arts Alliance, over the next four years the Division will seek to achieve the following goals:

- Quality arts experiences for all
- A healthy arts ecosystem where artists are supported and connected, and arts organizations are financially sustainable
- Artists, arts organization staff, and arts programming that reflect the diversity of our communities
- Division grants and services that are recognized statewide by all, particularly by artists, organizations, and community leaders

This strategic plan presents outcomes and strategies that will guide the Division in its grants, programs, and services over a four-year period. The Division intentionally developed a streamlined framework that can endure economic and political fluctuations, with the intent of constructing annual goal-oriented operational plans and performance indicators that align with the strategic plan and respond to current conditions. Those operational plans will be available on the Division's website at <https://arts.delaware.gov/strategic-plan>.

Additional background information on the planning process, including detailed input from interviews, focus groups, town halls, and public comments can be accessed in the Strategic Plan Appendix at [LINK TO PDF DOCUMENT ON WEBSITE.](#)

## **ABOUT US**

### **ABOUT THE DIVISION OF THE ARTS**

The Delaware Division of the Arts, a branch of the Delaware Department of State, is committed to supporting the arts and cultivating creativity to enhance the quality of life in Delaware. Together with its advisory body, the Delaware State Arts Council, the Division administers grants and programs that support arts programming, educate the public, increase awareness of the arts, and integrate the arts into all facets of Delaware life. The Division of the Arts was created by the Delaware General Assembly in 1989.

### **ABOUT THE DELAWARE STATE ARTS COUNCIL**

The Delaware State Arts Council advises the Division of the Arts on matters of arts policy, funding for the arts, and other issues relevant to support for the arts in Delaware. The Council, according to its enabling legislation, “shall be composed of not more than 15 members” appointed by the Governor, who represent the state geographically and politically and are appointed on the basis of their interest and experience in the arts. A list of the Council members serving when this plan was developed can be found on the last page of this document.

## **MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES**

### **MISSION**

The Delaware Division of the Arts is a state agency committed to supporting the arts and cultivating creativity to enhance the quality of life in Delaware.

### **VISION**

We envision a future where every person and community in Delaware has access to, and appreciation for, the diversity, richness, and transformative power of the arts.

### **CORE VALUES**

- **Artistic Merit:** Demonstrate the quality and impact of the arts
- **Diversity:** Recognize and include the many dimensions of human identity and difference
- **Equity:** Identify and eliminate barriers to participation in the arts through policy and practice
- **Inclusion:** Engage a diversity of individuals, communities, and perspectives to ensure equal access, representation, and belonging
- **Innovation:** Support new methods, ideas, and practices in artistic creation, programming, governance, and management

## **OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIES**

### **OUTCOME 1 Quality arts education experiences for all**

The Division will:

- Improve access to arts education experiences through focused funding initiatives
- Encourage exposure to diversified arts experiences (in and out of school)
- Engage higher education to enhance professional development opportunities for teaching artists and arts educators
- Increase the number of schools to apply for and receive Artist Residencies and Education Resource grants
- Collect data to confirm arts education resources are aligning with art experience needs

This Outcome will be evidenced by increased availability of arts education experiences for school-age youth, higher education students, and life-long learners; greater out-of-school collaboration with schools and nonprofits providing arts programming; schools reporting an ample supply of arts educators from higher education institutions; employer access to a workforce with the necessary artistic and creative skills to fill open positions; and expanded opportunities for life-long learning.

### **OUTCOME 2 A healthy arts ecosystem where artists are supported and connected, and arts organizations are financially sustainable**

The Division will:

- Evaluate and revise the Division’s grantmaking process to create equitable opportunities for funding across the spectrum of arts organizations and presenters
- Enhance artists’ career-building skills by facilitating artist connections and providing training opportunities
- Partner with Delaware Arts Alliance and other community groups to encourage greater participation and investment in the arts in Delaware by government, businesses, foundations, and individuals
- Encourage greater collaboration among arts organizations and artists statewide
- Expand partnerships with local municipalities to increase creative placemaking activities

This Outcome will be evidenced by Delaware’s recognition as an arts destination; artists who are connected to one another and to resources, training, and opportunities to enhance their work; an increase in arts endowment funds; recognition by government and businesses of arts and culture as a catalyst for thriving communities and economies; representation “at the table” when community investment is considered; and greater business engagement with the arts through volunteerism and financial support.

**OUTCOME 3 Artists, arts organization staff, and arts programming reflect the diversity of our communities**

The Division will:

- Identify new grant opportunities that encourage artistic expression and access to art forms that celebrate diverse cultures, including folk and traditional arts
- Provide funding and training for arts organizations to improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities
- Support art experiences for life-long learners, older adults, and veterans
- Invest in practices to build capacity, diversity, and inclusion in arts organizations

This Outcome will be evidenced by greater diversity among arts organization board members, staff, and artists; increased public awareness of and access to culturally diverse art forms; funding allocations reflecting community innovation and activities; and expanded geographic reach of funded programming.

**OUTCOME 4 Division grants and services are recognized statewide by all, particularly by artists, organizations, and community leaders**

The Division will:

- Expand outreach to encourage BIPOC artists and arts organization leaders to engage with the Division's programs and grant opportunities
- Increase Division participation in local community events
- Launch a public awareness campaign focused on Division programs, resources, and services

This Outcome will be evidenced by more requests for Division funding by new artists and organizations (both arts and community-based) and greater general public awareness of the Division's grantmaking, services, and expertise, including DelawareScene.com.



## **PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS**

### **DELAWARE DIVISION OF THE ARTS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

Arts Summit (Biennial)

Delaware Artist Roster

*Delaware State of the Arts* Podcasts

Delaware State Employee Art Exhibition (Annual)

DelawareScene.com

Governor's Awards for the Arts

Grants: Individual Artists, Arts Organizations, Schools, and Community-Based Organizations

Meet the Artist Videos

Mezzanine Gallery

Delaware Poet Laureate

Poetry Out Loud

Poetry and Prose Writers Retreat (Biennial)

Publications, Research, and Resources

StartUp Program for Emerging Arts Organizations

Technical Assistance and Resource Referral

Workshops and Professional Development

### **DELAWARE DIVISION OF THE ARTS PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS**

Building recognition and support for the extraordinary and dynamic value of the arts and leading, serving, and advancing the diverse networks of organizations and individuals who cultivate the arts in America

#### **ARTS CENTER/GALLERY, DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY**

Hosting the annual Scholastics Visual and Literary Exhibition and Awards and the annual State Employee Art Exhibition

#### **BIGGS MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART**

Hosting the annual Individual Artist Fellowship exhibition and reception for the Division

#### **DELAWARE ALLIANCE FOR NONPROFIT ADVANCEMENT**

Strengthening, enhancing, and advancing nonprofits and the sector in Delaware through advocacy, training, capacity building, and research

#### **DELAWARE ARTS ALLIANCE**

Advocating for the central role of the arts and arts education in advancing dynamic communities and a creative citizenry

DELAWARE DIVISION OF LIBRARIES

Funding for a statewide Summer Reading Program supporting arts programming at 33 libraries

DELAWARE DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Funding for statewide Arts in the Parks programming with emphasis on traditional and folk-art forms

MID ATLANTIC ARTS FOUNDATION

Supporting regional arts touring and presenters' initiatives

NATIONAL ARTS PROGRAM

Empowering organizations across the country to host art exhibitions that showcase the creativity of their employees and families. NAP partners with the Division to feature the artwork of state employees and their families.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF STATE ARTS AGENCIES

Sharing best practices, information, and research

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

Funding and promoting artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF AMERICAN PEN WOMEN

Funding Delaware's literary program in the National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards serving 450+ middle and high school students annually

NEWS RADIO 1450 WILM

Sponsoring Delaware State of the Arts, a weekly radio broadcast and podcast featuring Delaware artists, arts organizations, and issues

## **COMMUNITY INPUT**

### **PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

The Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement (DANA) was contracted to conduct research and facilitate plan development. The Delaware State Arts Council (DSAC) provided guidance on the Division's revised Mission, Vision, and Value Statement and reviewed the final plan (March 2021) after public comments were gathered. Throughout the process, a working group of Division staff and representatives from the Council was led by Dierdre Montgomery, arts consultant specialist in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### **PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS**

Community input was gathered via multiple channels, with intentional outreach to communities and artists that have not previously engaged with the Division. Over 400 individuals provided feedback to the Division in a process that consisted of:

- **September & October 2020:** Thirty 45-minute interviews engaging representatives of business; government; philanthropy; nonprofit and for-profit arts and social organizations; patrons; donors; artists; and arts educators across the state.
- **October 2020:** Ten virtual focus groups via Zoom, each representing a different constituency across all three Delaware counties. They included practicing artists; both volunteer and professionally staffed nonprofit arts organizations; non-arts community-based organizations that provide arts programming; school-based educators; and patrons and donors.
- **November 2020:** Three 90-minute virtual town halls – open public forums – to elicit feedback from a wide range of Delaware citizens.
- **December 2020:** Four online surveys seeking input from artists, arts educators, business leaders, and leaders from nonprofit institutions (arts and others).
- **January 2021:** Two-week public comment period soliciting general input on a draft plan for final reviewing and editing.

## **PLANNING GROUP**

### **Delaware Division of the Arts Staff**

Paul Weagraff, Director  
Kristin Pleasanton, Deputy Director  
Leeann Wallett, Marketing/Communications

### **Delaware State Arts Council**

Tina Betz, Director – Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs, City of Wilmington  
David Fleming – Community Leader  
Rosetta Roach – Visual Arts Educator (Retired), Capital School District

### **Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement Staff**

Sheila Bravo, President & CEO  
Stephanie Sullivan, Research Assistant

### **Strategic Consulting and Advising**

Dierdra Montgomery

## **DELAWARE DIVISION OF THE ARTS**

Paul Weagraff, Director  
Kristin Pleasanton, Deputy Director  
Kaitlin Ammon, Marketing/Communications  
Kathleen Dinsmore, Organization Support  
Sheila Dean Ross, Arts Education and Accessibility  
Roxanne Stanulis, Artist Programs and Services  
Dana Wise, Office Manager and Council Logistics/Correspondence

## **DELAWARE STATE ARTS COUNCIL MEMBERS**

The Council, appointed by the Governor, is composed of individuals from across the state with diverse backgrounds and expertise including artistic disciplines, organizational management, finance, marketing, education, and community leadership. For details on the Delaware State Arts Council roles and responsibilities, visit <https://arts.delaware.gov>

J. Mack Wathen, Hockessin (Chair)  
Madeleine Bayard, Wilmington  
Jacalyn Beam, Greenville  
Tina Betz, Wilmington  
Donna Blakey, Dover  
David Fleming, Wilmington  
Andrew F. Horgan, Wilmington  
Janis L. Julian, Wilmington

Michael Kalmbach, Newark  
Mary Ann C. Miller, Wilmington  
Christopher C. Moore, Wilmington  
John T. Muller, Dover  
Cheryle Pringle, Newark  
Rosetta Roach, Magnolia  
Daniel Shelton, Newark

### **COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS**

We are grateful to the more than 400 individuals who willingly and generously gave of their time and expertise by participating in interviews, focus groups, and town hall meetings. Their contributions have been invaluable in informing this plan.

### **APPENDIX AND FURTHER INFORMATION**

The findings that informed the creation of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan were compiled from a series of individual interviews, focus groups, virtual town hall meetings, online surveys, and email comments. Details of the public input process and findings can be found in the Strategic Plan Appendix on the Division website at [LINK TO DOCUMENT](#)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTERS

- **Arts E-News** – a monthly newsletter highlighting grants, opportunities, Division programs, events, and news
- **Scene Stealers** – a bi-weekly digest of DelawareScene arts and cultural events across Delaware
- **Mezzanine Gallery** – Your invitation to monthly exhibitions at the Mezzanine Gallery, 820 North French Street, Wilmington

Go to [arts.delaware.gov](https://arts.delaware.gov) and click “Join Our Mailing List” to sign up for mailings.

### VISIT OUR ARTS & CULTURE CALENDAR

Visit [DelawareScene.com](https://DelawareScene.com) for the most comprehensive listing of Delaware Arts & Culture events

### FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



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[www.instagram.com/artsdelaware/](https://www.instagram.com/artsdelaware/)



[www.youtube.com/user/DelawareArts](https://www.youtube.com/user/DelawareArts)

### CONTACT US

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